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Sirmans, Danica M.

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Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, CNO Keynotes Fall Graduation

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Article By: MC3 Danica M. Sirmans

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) honored its latest round of graduates during the 2013 Fall Quarter Graduation Ceremony held in King Auditorium, Dec. 20.

Presiding over a graduation ceremony for the first time was NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ronald A. Route, who after welcoming the graduates and their families, acknowledged the work of faculty and staff in preparing today's soon-to-be alumni.

Route, himself an NPS alumnus, went on to introduce a fellow operations research graduate in the day's keynote speaker, retired Adm. Michael G. Mullen, 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and 28th Chief of Naval Operations. As Mullen took the podium to address the graduating class, the alumnus first expressed his gratitude to the graduates' families and friends.

"There's not a graduate here that could succeed without the support of their families," said Mullen. "Having done this for awhile, I can tell you that you have set the standard for that kind of support and we are eternally grateful."

He went on to offer his praise to the students for achieving such an accomplishment, and reaching an important milestone in their career.

"Thank you to the students for your service and your dedication. You are beacons for hope, and you set the example for so many different institutions and countries around the world," Mullen said.

"And it doesn't stop here, that service is going to be equally, if not more challenging, than that of the past. But that optimism will prove to deliver," he continued. "As the economy gets better, and as wars come to an end, it is the battalion, shift and squadron commanders who must focus on retaining our best junior officers – many of whom are in this room."

In closing his remarks, Mullen reminded the graduates that their work is far from over and encouraged them to go forth with a renewed sense of responsibility.

"What I ask of everyone in uniform is that you figure out a way to lead. You make a difference in people's lives, institutions, and in your countries," Mullen stressed.

"You are just beginning in your learning hill ... And there's a great deal to learn. Continue to learn, grow and expand your comfort zone."

NPS graduated a total of 373 students earning 377 advanced degrees this quarter. Of note, Mullen's own son, Lt. Cmdr. John S. Mullen, was a member of the quarter's graduating class, earning a Master of Business Administration degree.

Watch the [Fall Graduation Ceremony](#) on the NPS video portal.

Posted December 20, 2013



Members of the Naval Postgraduate School's Fall Quarter's graduating class listen in as NPS alumnus retired Adm. Michael G. Mullen, 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and 28th Chief of Naval Operations, offers keynote remarks during commencement ceremonies, Dec. 20.